ARC Banner.jpg

The following observations are based on an instructional rounds visit to Downingtown Middle School on September 28, 2016. All classrooms were visited during these rounds. Assistant Principal, Shawn Wright joined the visits for several classrooms.

This asset inventory organizes the data according Edutopia’s *Ten Tips for Classroom Management* in order to disaggregate the data from specific classrooms and teachers, while aligning it with recognized best practices. The assets identified below were not necessarily observed in every classroom, and are not meant to evaluate any classroom or teacher. Instead, please treat them as the building blocks for success in your implementation of your authentic learning initiative, and discuss and share them as widely as possible.

1. Build Community

* The teacher shared personal stories with the class to connect to the learners and the lesson.
* Learners are asked to validate one another's work rather than the teacher doing so.
* Learners have chances to work independently then together in their teams.
* Teacher is effective at spreading discussion around the tables/groups and individual learners at tables.
* Collaborative time is used as a chance for learners to compare solution strategies.
* The use of partners to support one another.
* Many learners thank their teachers at the conclusion of the class.
* Teacher response: “Thank you for contributing,” even when the response was non-germane to the question posed.
* Personal conferences with learners to improve their work.
* Music in the background during learner work time.
* The use of a game approach to laugh with learners while formatively assessing them in a low-stakes way.
* Learners were engaged while observing other team presentations and responded positively to their peers.

2. Design a Safe, Friendly, and Well-Managed Classroom Environment

* Let the learners collaboratively complete the activity rather than merely observing
* Learners inhabit a diversity of learning spaces (partners, groups, teams, horseshoe format).
* Teacher desk is a minimal presence.
* Where “horseshoe seating” is used, it is laid out with more options for interaction (rather than in ranks).
* Teacher interaction was used as support and guidance, rather than merely disseminating information.
* Decor is a mix of informational and inspirational posters. Wall decorations are an effective mix of image and text.
* A variety of materials are used to support learners.
* In transitions, the teacher is effective in making sure every learner has what he or she needs for next activity.
* Appropriate wait time to assure that all learners have a chance to process before discussing possible answers.
* Most learners are smiling while working, even when struggling. Several are in self-dialogue.
* Every learner was willing to talk and interact with not only Mr. Wright, whom them obviously know and recognize, but with me, a stranger.
* Learners were able to clearly articulate their tasks, goals, or assignments.
* Learners were able to answer questions when prompted by myself.
* Wait time to assure that all students have a chance to process before discussing possible answers.
* Humor used to create a relaxed atmosphere where learning is still at the forefront.
* Teacher interaction was used as support and guidance, rather than merely disseminating information.
* Every learner, with whom I engaged, was willing to talk and interact freely.
* Transition time was minimal from one activity to the next with a variety of activities used throughout the portion of the class observed. (This is especially important to note, as the observation time was not a full class period.)
* When technology was not working, learners quietly and quickly transitioned to their independent reading while patiently waiting for the teacher to troubleshoot the issue.

3. Include Learners in Creating Rules, Norms, Routines, and Consequences

* Learners seem empowered to get what they need in the room.
* Teaching through multiple intelligences (verbal and bodily-kinesthetic)
* Voice and choice evident in several activities.
* The use of the iPads throughout much of the class period without concern that learners would be off-task or using a game app.
* An expressed desire to “take a step-back” as the teacher.
* Examples to model the process before learners began their activity.
* Good transition of activity times so that learners continually were engaged in the work without getting bored.
* Asking of learners their opinions about proceeding with planned activities.
* Established routines through signaling.
* Meet with your “\_\_\_\_\_” partner: pre-determined partner roles for quick transitions to peer interaction moments.

4. Create a Variety of Communications Channels

* Probing questions asked to dig deeper into learner responses.
* The use of graphic organizers to develop ideas and thoughts.
* Differing levels of Bloom’s addressed throughout the lesson to ensure all learners’ needs were met.
* Teacher effectively models appropriate use of technology.
* Peer feedback utilized.
* The use of an interactive notebook.
* Stopping and asking questions about vocabulary to reinforce terms.
* Breaking down of vocabulary words to ensure understanding rather than for memorization.
* Promoting quieter learners to participate instead of those that like to talk the most.
* The use of Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning for learners to articulate their learning.
* Asked for learners to write down why an answer was incorrect, rather than just the correct answer.
* The use of a simulation to communicate the learning process.
* The use of warm-ups at the start of class.
* Teacher feedback that was “kind, specific, and helpful” (Ron Berger). (For instance, “How are you going to indicate to me the meaning?” and “I’d like you to use imagery. Here is an example….”
* “If you don’t understand this come back during Reach.”
* Teacher feedback provided in the Google Doc.
* The use of Schoology to house class information.
* Classroom aides were utilized to communicate with learners when extra support is needed.
* Classroom volunteers were utilized as experts to help students.
* Interactive whiteboard utilized to show the work process.
* Visual cues on how to remember the x and y-axis.

5. Always Be Calm, Fair, and Consistent

* Teacher models effective organization of responses before beginning. Most learners follow model.
* Teacher holds accountable those who start to check out.
* Redirection of learners as needed.
* When a glass was broken during class, it was swiftly, and without too much interruption, dealt with before the class could get out of control.
* Gave multiple students the opportunity to provide possible answers before the correct answer was given.
* The use of rubrics for assignments.
* The explanation of rubrics and reminder of the use of grading practices in using the rubrics.
* The use of a self-editing checklist.

6. Know the Learners You Teach

* Just in time feedback provided for change
* Use of vocabulary acquisition by doing – from abstract to concrete.
* Learners encouraged to work in the hall if desired.
* Stopping every few steps to ensure learners understand the information.
* Teacher confirms individual understanding by asking class to offer a few of their own examples.
* Teacher appreciates difference of learner experiences with visual/auditory learning.
* Wide offering of electives reaches far more students based on their interests.
* Allowance for a learner to be fidgety and moving, as long as continuing to participate, as the teacher recognized this child’s need for movement.
* Learners were given the option to listen to music while working.
* Scaffolds were provided, rather than jumping into the bulk of the lesson.
* Scaffolds from non-scientific to scientific for learners to better grasp the process.

7. Address Conflict Quickly and Wisely

* Teacher is highly effective in using presence to ensure learners are capturing relevant details.
* Teacher moves around from table to table coaching
* Teacher has problem solving strategies posted on the wall so that students can learn to help themselves/each other.
* Disruptive learner dealt with in the hallway rather than in front of the class.

8. Integrate Positive Classroom Rituals

* Teacher focuses on problem solving strategies rather than getting the answer. This makes getting the right answer about getting the process right.
* Teacher is clear in signaling start and approaching end of reading time. Acknowledges student interest in independent reading.
* Class rules posted are simplified and clear, so as not to overwhelm learners.
* 3-2-1 to bring students back to attention.
* QR code used for classroom sign out.
* Red Zone signs for technology

9. Keep it Real

* Literacy stressed
* Expectations on deadlines, but allowances for editing multiple drafts.
* The use of scenarios using teachers in the building as participants to engage learners in the process.

10. Partner with Parents and Guardians

* No opportunity to observe this interaction.